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Item 112 of the preliminary list*
ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

Letter dated 8 March 1993 from the Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a declaration issued by the Tunisian National Commission for Women and the Family on the occasion of the observance, on 8 March, of International Women's Day.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly under item 112 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) Hamadi KHOUINI
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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ANNEX

Declaration by the Tunisian National Commission for Women and the Family on 8 March 1993

Tunisia is entitled today to join the nations that believe in human rights in proudly observing International Women's Day, which embodies the commitment of the peoples of the world to upholding the dignity and freedom of women and guaranteeing their fundamental rights.

Tunisia is proud that women's rights have today become an irrevocable national acquisition. This became clear, in particular, following the blessed change of 7 November 1987, when the rights of Tunisian women were strengthened by new revolutionary gains, since President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali believes that human rights constitute a third dimension inseparable from the dual dimensions of democracy and development. Tunisia has taken upon itself the obligation to continue the struggle to establish a civilian society totally removed from all forms of discrimination, arbitrariness and extremism, in its desire to guarantee freedom, equality and dignity for all members of society under the protection of national sovereignty.

Tunisia was in the forefront of the States that sought to establish their policy on the building of a cohesive and balanced society and on the enactment of national laws and regulations based on the principle of equality between the sexes and the guaranteeing of the same benefits to all citizens, so that they may exercise their rights and perform their obligations in all freedom and security.

On the basis of these principles and the lofty examples and enlightened reform movements that have their roots in our Arab and Islamic culture, in 1956 Tunisian legislators took the initiative of enacting the Code of Personal Status, which codified the rights of women, children and the family and confirmed the principle of equal opportunities for all family members. The 13th of August, the day on which the Code was enacted, was declared a national holiday for women and an official unpaid holiday unique to Tunisia and intended to honour women and affirm their gains.

Tunisia was also in the vanguard of the countries that signed the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 18 December 1979, in its zeal to endeavour to confirm equality between men and women in all fields and to guarantee that both sexes benefited from the various aspects of development.

Tunisia takes advantage of the opportunity afforded by the observance of International Women's Day to urge the international community to combat the injustices and the various kinds of arbitrary treatment to which women are subjected in some parts of the world and to devise all possible means of firmly opposing the scourge of war and all forms of arbitrary treatment and

terrorism, including religious extremism, discrimination and poverty, particularly that suffered by Palestinian women, women in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Somali women.

Tunisia calls upon the international community to show solidarity and to cooperate in halting these tragedies and establishing a world peace based on respect for international instruments and laws.